

The Advantages of Peaceableness.

IN TWO
SERMONS,

Preach'd on

St. MATTH. V. 9.

*Blessed are the Peacemakers;
for they shall be called the
Children of GOD.*

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Adisham in Kent; and Chaplain to the
Right Honourable the Earl of Gallway,
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Privy Council.

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The Two following
SERMONS
 ARE
 Most humbly Dedicated
 TO THE
WHIGGS,
 And to the
TORIES;
By their devoted Servant
B. R.

Who earnestly beseecheth God, to banish from among them, all Envy, Discord and Quarrels; to unite strictly their Hearts; and to incline them to Peace and Charity: That they may be Members of the Church, and so partake of the most glorious Privileges, and of the exceeding great Advantages of that Mystical Body of Christ.

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SER-

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S E R M O N I.

St. MATTH. V. 9.

*Blessed are the Peacemakers,
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JESUS CHRIST subjoins Peaceableness to the Purity of the Heart, and with a great deal of Reason; for the first proceeds from, and is the Effect of the other; and as all Disputes, Jars, Emulations, Quarrels and Contentions do arise from the Impurity of the Heart, from Pride, Ambition, Lust, Covetousness and Hypocrisy; so does Peaceableness and a quiet Mind, flow from a pure, humble, honest, upright, sincere, innocent Heart. Vice is turbulent, mutinous, blustering, untractable; but Virtue is quite the Reverse; for she is

is a Lover of Peace, Concord, Tran-
 Jam. iii. quillity and Quietness. *The Wisdom*
 17. *that is from above, says St. James, is,*
first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy
to be intreated; full of mercy and good
fruits: Wherefore our blessed Lord
having said, Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God, subjoins, Blessed
are the Peacemakers, &c.

Jesus Christ does two Things in my
 Text, *First*, He affirms, That the Peace-
 makers are blessed; and *Secondly*, He
 gives the Reason of their being so;
 for, says he, *They shall be called the Chil-*
dren of God. Before I proceed further,
 I must first shew you the Import of
 being a Peacemaker.

It signifies a peaceable-minded Man;
 one that's peaceably dispos'd, that ap-
 plies himself, and takes his Delight in
 promoting Peace; for, *to make* in
 Rev. xxi. Scripture-Phrase, denotes sometimes the
 27, xxii, Habit or Inclination of the Mind; as
 16. *to make a Lie, is to be given, inclined*
 1 John ii. *to lying. To do, or, as it is in the*
 29. iii. 4. *Original, to make Righteousness; and*
 ὁ ποιῶν *Sin imports the Bent to either of them,*
 τὴν δικαιο- *as it may be seen in St. John's first*
 στήναι, *Epistle, So to make Peace, is to have an*
 ἐξ αὐτοῦ *Affection to it.*
 γὰρ
 τῶν. Πας
 ὁ ποιῶν
 τὴν ἀμαρ-
 τῶν, καὶ
 ἀπομύαν
 ποιεῖ.

Secondly,

Secondly, I must tell you which are the Predispositions to Peace ; First, It is necessary our Understanding should be qualified both with Wisdom and with Humility ; with Wisdom *whose* Prov. iii. *paths are peace* ; for it shews us the admirable Beauty, the inestimable Price, the great Excellency, and the wonderful Treasures of Peace ; and so persuades us powerfully to love heartily, to cherish with Care, and to advance it as much as we can. With Humility, for it engages us to submit to our Superiors, to support the Infirmities of our Brethren, to bear their Faults, to pass by their Injuries, to suffer their Unkindnesses, and to forgive them when they do us any Wrong. Secondly, Our Wills and Affections must be qualified with Love and Charity ; with Love, for we are very apt to shew a great deal of Meekness, Lenity, Indulgence, Favour and Benevolence to them we truly love ; and withal, to make use of our Skill and Credit to help them to what may contribute to their Welfare. With Charity ; for, as St. Paul tells us, in the 13th of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *Charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, does not behave it self* unseemly,

unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Thirdly, Our Consciences must be qualified with Purity; for, when they are unclean, guilty, full of Reproaches and Remorses, they are presently troubled, uneasy and disquieted; but when they are pure, innocent, upright, they are kept clear, and they possess an admirable Serenity.

Now I must do three Things; *First*, Shew you how to get a peaceable Mind. *Secondly*, Lay before you some Motives to induce you to it; and *Thirdly*, Prove to you, that it is our Duty to promote Peace as far as in us lies.

First, To be possessed with Peaceableness, we must overcome all exceptions, peevish, whimsical, censorious Humour; submit our Fancies to our Reason, and get the Victory over our unruly Passions, especially Anger; for a cross, capricious, slandering, angry Person, is very troublesome and vexatious to himself, as well as intolerable and grievous to others; there can be no Peace with him. After that, we must

must be mild to, and entertain a charitable Opinion of those we have to deal with, give both to their Actions and to their Discourse, as favourable a Construction as we can; render to every Body his due, and carefully avoid all Whisperers, Backbiters, Tale-bearers and Double-dealers; the Bane of Mankind: And whenever we are accus'd of having either done or said any Thing against our Neighbours, we must take care to clear our selves with Candor, Meekness and Moderation. We must be content in our present Station, consider that our Circumstances are a great deal better than we deserve; and be thankful to God's Providence, for the inexpressible Blessings He has been pleased to bestow upon us: And when he thinks fit to afflict us, far from complaining, we are to acknowledge that he uses us with all the Tenderness possible, considering how great Sinners we are, and that his Goodness, Mercy and Meekness towards us are unspeakable. We must take Care never to fasten our Ambition or Covetousness on any Thing that's either above our reach, or which we cannot attain without disturbing the Common Peace. Finally, we must

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submit to the present Government in Church and State, follow their Directions, obey their Commands, and do all that in us lies for the Service and Welfare of both. Thus we may be possessed with Peaceableness, a blessed Qualification, which renders us amiable both in the Sight of God, and in the Eyes of Men; a great Blessing, and a precious Treasure to our Relations, Friends, Neighbours and Acquaintances: For Peace is to our Minds, what Health is to our Bodies, it keeps them well disposed, and it is the Foundation of their Happiness; and without that precious Peace, there can be but Uneasiness, Disgust and Aversion.

I am now, *Secondly*, to lay before you, the Motives to induce you to the getting of a peaceable Mind. Some are taken from,

- Our Everlasting Father, the perfectest of all Patterns; for he is *The God of peace*, says St. Paul to the Romans, *Who has called us to peace*, says he to the Corinthians; some from our Lord Jesus Christ, *Who is the Prince of Peace*, and who left us Peace for a Legacy: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Some from that blessed Saviour's Gospel; for it is called *The Gospel of peace*, and
- Rom. xvi. 20.
1 Cor. vii. 15.
Is. ix. 6.
John xiv. 27.
Rom. x. 15.

and from his Law, which is truly a Law of Peace; for its chief Aim is to engage Men to live quietly and peaceably one with another. Some from his Disciples, being compared to *Doves* Matt. x. 16. 25, 33. and *Sheep*. Some are taken from the Holy Spirit, for one of his Fruits is *Peace*, says St. Paul to the *Galatians*. John x. 14. Gal. v. 22. Some from the Scripture, declaring that God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace, commanding *To follow peace with all men, and holiness: To have salt in our selves, and peace one with another; and, If it be possible as much as lieth in us to live peaceably with all Men; Promising, that if We live in peace, the God of love and peace shall be with us:* 1 Cor. xiv. 3. Heb. xii. 14. Mark ix. 50. Rom. xii. 18. And pressing us earnestly to endeavour to keep *The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;* with this forcible Argument and powerful Motives, *There is one body and one spirit; and we are called in one hope of our calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all; who is above all, and through all, and in us all.* 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. These are certainly very powerful Motives to induce us to Peace, but if they are not sufficient to engage us to follow it, here are some that will perhaps be so.

Some are taken from our own present Interest, for among the Things necessary in order to be happy even in this Life, *David* and *St. Peter* reckon, *Ps. xxxiv.* *That the seeking of peace is one, and the pursuing it another.* Besides, the peaceable-minded Man has the inexpressible Satisfaction to enjoy himself a great Peace, one of the best Blessings; for *Ps. xxxvii.* *The meek shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace,* says *David*. The great Governor of the Universe has a great Value for him; for, says *St. Peter*, *1 Pet. iii.* *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is in the sight of God of a great price.* Gladness shall be his Reward; for, says the wise King, *Prov. xii.* *To the counsellor of peace is joy.* But we need not go farther than my Text, for powerful Reasons to persuade us to be of a peaceable Mind; because Blessing does attend it. Peaceableness blesteth a Man. The Fountain of all Truth declares that: *Blessed are,* says our Dear Lord, *the Peacemakers, &c.* and indeed, that precious Qualification frees a Man from many Evils, preserves him from many Dangers, secures him from many Misfortunes, diverts from him a Curse, which otherwise would fall upon the Comforts of his Life, which keeps him from

from an intire ruin, which Discord, Contention and Quarrels would draw upon him: But besides, Peaceableness bleſſeth him in his Name, for he gets a good Reputation, and becomes the delight of all good Men; in his Estate, which God either encreaſes, or gives him the Grace to enjoy it comfortably, in his Body and in his Soul, for he is free from ſeveral Paſſions, which put in diſorder, and deſtroy the Health of the one, cloud the other, and diſturb its Tranquillity. In ſhort, it bleſſeth him both in this Life, with innumerable Favours from Heaven, with the precious Eſteem of all good People, and with an unexprefſible Content: It bleſſeth him at his Death with unſpeakable Comforts; and after his Departure, with the moſt deſirable Sight of God, with a ſupreme Felicity, inexhauſtible Treasures and an endless Glory. And thus Peaceableness is not only very advantageous in this World, but it will be ſo likewise, and infinitely more, in the other. Theſe Motives are, methinks, very forcible Reasons to induce us powerfully to diſpoſe and apply our ſelves to Peaceableness, to ſtudy it with all the Care poſſible, and to make our Delight of Peace.

But

Jam. iii.
16.

But a tender Regard of that Peace must not only be entertained in our selves; but it is likewise of an absolute Necessity to entertain it in others. 'Tis not enough for Christians, for the Disciples, the Members, the Servants of him whose glorious Title is to be the Prince of Peace; 'tis not sufficient, I say, for them to be peaceably disposed themselves; for they are oblig'd besides, to promote and advance, and cherish Peace among their Brethren as much as in them lies, and to imitate the Son of God, who descended from Heaven upon Earth, took our Nature with all its innocent Infirmities, and suffered a cursed, a most cruel and ignominious Death, that he might make Peace between his Everlasting Father, and poor wretched Men. The Glory of God, if we take it to Heart, engages us to Peace-making; for, *where envying and strife is, says St. James, there is confusion and every evil work*: And so God's Laws are transgressed, contemned and trampled upon. The Love of our Neighbours is another Inducement to it; for the making Peace is a very great Benefit both to their Souls and Bodies; because it has a Tendency to the securing their Welfare.

Welfare. It is likewise an Advantage both to their Goods and Credit ; because it aims either at the Increasing, or at least at the Preserving them. A third Motive to procure Peace among Men, is the good of the Society ; and in particular of the Church ; for the reconciling of Enemies heals both their Breaches, consolidates their torn Members, and prevents in them many Mischiefs ; and thus it strengthens both Church and State against, renders them formidable to, and contributes to their getting the Victory over, their Enemies. Wherefore, what has been said of the Teachers of the Gospel, *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace,* may be applied to all the Promoters of that precious Peace ; especially if it is added, that they draw many great Comforts, and bring from Heaven innumerable Blessings upon them both. A fourth Motive is taken from our own Interest, for such as sow Peace, shall reap the Fruits of it, which are an unexpressible Comfort, an unspeakable Joy, an unutterable Satisfaction in their Souls : Moreover, the Kindness and Love of God, of all Blessings the greatest ; and withal, the Affection and good

Psal. lx. 2.

Rom. x.
15.

good Will of Men : Wherefore let us endeavour, according to our several Stations, to beget in the Hearts of all we converse with, a true Value for that most precious Jewel, Peace ; and so prevent Unkindnesses, Disputes, Contentions, Jars, Strifes, which often ruin Families, disturb the Commonwealth, and distract the Church : And whenever we take notice of some Misunderstanding amongst our Brethren, let us make them Friends again with all haste ; for it is much more in the Power of peaceable and discreet Men to cure at first the Mistakes which breed Quarrels and Divisions, and far more easy and more profitable thus to prevent than to pacify Variances. Let us take all the Care possible to preserve Peace where it is settled, and where it is lost, do our best to recover that great Blessing, the Foundation of all Temporal Joys, of all the Pleasures of this World, and of all the Satisfaction we may enjoy in this Life. Finally, let us heartily pray the God of Peace, to banish from among us all Discord, Debate, Envy, Emulation ; to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace, the Cause of Plenty, and the Foundation of great Comforts ; and to estab-

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blish it in Families, in the State, and chiefly in the Church.

By being thus peaceable-minded Men, and by contributing in that manner to Peace, we shall get the glorious Title, and have the exceeding great Advantages of being the Children of the King of all Kings, of the Supreme Monarch of Heaven and Earth, of the Everlasting Father, of the Almighty Creator of the Universe; for his most Beloved and Eternal Son has declared it to us. *Blessed are, says he, the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*

It is what I should now examine, had I not considered, that the Subject being of great Importance, I must of necessity insist and enlarge upon it: Wherefore, for fear of Trespassing upon your Patience, by too long a Discourse, I design to put it off to another Opportunity, and to pass now to the Application.

You have heard, my Beloved, how glorious, how useful, how profitable it is to be of a peaceable Mind, and carefully to promote Peace among Men! How pleasant it is to Almighty God, and acceptable to all good People! And yet, where are the Persons that

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love truly, and endeavour sincerely to advance that precious Peace? Look every where, in the Cities, in the Towns, in the Villages, in the Hamlets, in Palaces, in Houses, and in Cottages ; and in all these Places you'll find and perceive there are Grudges, Emulations, Disputes, Quarrels, Factions and Mutiny : You'll see the Son against his Father, the Daughter against her Mother, the Brothers against their Sisters, the Servants against their Masters, the Scholars against their Teachers, the Subjects against their Sovereigns ; and even a great many People disagree with themselves : You'll be Witnesses, how ill, Men use, how despitefully they tease, and how barbarously they afflict one another.

Good God ! What a melancholick Sight it is to see, I will not say Creatures of the same Kind, of the same Nature, of the same Blood ; but Christians who are Members of the same Body, who have the same Father, the same Hope, the same Faith ; who are purchased by the same Blood, Instructed by the same Scripture, inlightned by the same Spirit, begotten and born a-new by the same Grace, fed at the same Table, and called to the same Inheritance ;

heritance; what a deplorable Sight is it to see them, like wild Beasts, tear one another in pieces!

What I say does not happen now and then; but continually, and is not done here and there, but every where; nor by few, but by most People: For who is guiltless in this respect? I appeal to the Consciences of those who ~~now hear me~~, whether they have not wronged their Neighbours some Way or other, either by Violence or Injustice, or bad Examples, or the Venom of their Tongues? If it is not in his Body, whether it is not in his Soul? If it is not in his Soul, whether it is not in his Goods? If it is not in his Goods, whether it is not in his Reputation? The fear either of corporal Punishments, or of Dishonour, keeps abundance of People from Murther, Theft, Adultery and Rebellion; but where there's no such Fear, Vice triumphs and becomes epidemical; for what's more common than to see and hear People, even People that flatter themselves to be of the Blessed, Jesus Christ speaks of in my Text; and that are look'd upon too, as good, pious and charitable People; what's more common, I say, than to see and hear

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them (because there's no such Fear) poison their Neighbours Discourses, and blacken their Actions, debase their Persons, that they may exalt their own; and discover their Faults, or forge some, that they may appear more perfect than they; though they become by doing so, as criminal as if they were guilty of the above-mention'd Crimes? For is not a good Name, as precious as Life? But I must tell the Slanderers, that if they think to cover their Faults by laying open those of their Neighbours, and to extol themselves by depressing them, they are exceedingly mistaken; for any reasonable Man will conclude from their slanderous Tongues, that they are full of Faults; and from their Pride, that they are unknown to themselves. And I must assure them besides, that they will be none of the Blessed, Jesus Christ mentions in my Text, as long as they continue to let their venomous Tongues loose against their poor Neighbours; for, *The revilers shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven*, says St. Paul to the *Corinthians*. But our Saviour tells us, *Blessed are the peacemakers*. Now peaceable-minded Men are indeed a great Blessing, both to themselves and

1 Cor. vi.
10.

and to Mankind ; for they procure to themselves as well as to others, Rest and Quietness, the Foundation of all Content; and besides, they have the inexpressible Satisfaction of having done good and charitable Offices to their Brethren, and of imitating the God, whose Children they are; but the Breakers of Peace are a Plague to themselves, and the Bane of Mankind, and the Imitators of the Devil, whose Children I pray God they may not continue to be.

Let us then follow Peace, and promote it with all the Diligence, and all the Care we are capable of. And consider, that in order to have a good Success in the Pursuit, and in the Advancing it; we must first be in Peace with ourselves; and that we may be so, we must subdue our Passions; especially *Anger*, which *resteth in the bosom of* Eccl. vii. *fools*, says *Solomon*; for if these Passions 9. be not master'd and kept under by Reason, they are like the Sea, the least Wind, I mean a Provocation never so little, raises them, and ruffles the poor Man's Soul they have gotten Possession of. *Secondly*, We must put up Affronts, pass by Unkindnesses, tread Injuries under Foot, bear patiently the Wrongs done

Prov. xix.
11.

done to us, put by the Remembrance of Offences ; and consider, that it is the Part of a wise Man, to avoid carefully the being discompos'd by Wrath ; for *The discretion of a man deferreth his Anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*, said the wise King ; but it only belongs to a foolish Heart to be the Nest of Anger. If we follow these Directions that lead us directly to Peace, we shall be as blessed in this Life, as the Condition of our Nature can permit it ; and in the other, our Blessedness shall be perfect. *Which God of his infinite Goodness, &c.*

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SERMON II.

St. MATTH. V. 9.

*Blessed are the Peacemakers,
for they shall be called the
Children of GOD.*

I Have endeavour'd in my first Discourse upon these Words, to persuade you, not only to be of a peaceable Mind and Disposition; but likewise to make use of your Industry, Discretion and Prudence to reconcile your Brethren, and to make them Friends again. I have laid before you several powerful Motives, to induce you to follow with all diligence, to promote carefully, and to advance as much as you can the blessed Peace. I am now going to shew you the exceeding great, wonderful, very surprizing (and had we not the strongest

est Proofs thereof) incredible Advantages of our being Peacemakers. Jesus Christ himself, the Eternal Son of the Everlasting Father declares, that the Peacemakers are blessed, and he gives this Reason; for says he, *They shall be called the children of God.* O glorious Title! wonderful Privilege! unexpressible Advantage! These last Words of my Text shall be, with the Help of the Fountain of all Knowledge and Wisdom, the Subject of this my Discourse. I must begin to explain them, by telling you,

That there is a double Calling, the one of Men, and the other of God. The Calling of Men is oftentimes groundless, because of their Ignorance, and their giving of Names don't bestow upon the Things signified by these Names; because of their want of Power: But it's quite otherwise with God; for he always calls Things as they truly are, because he knows perfectly well their Natures; and whenever he is pleased to give any Name, he grants at the same Time what it imports, because he is Almighty; wherefore being Truth it self, the absolute Master and Fountain of all Honour, Riches, Happiness and Goodness,

ness, whenever he calls a Creature, either glorious or rich, or happy, or good, it is certainly so. If then he calls us his Children, he will certainly make us such, and bestow upon us all the inestimable Advantages belonging to his Children; he will bring us to a new Life, give us a new Constitution, change our corruptible Nature into an incorruptible One, and make us like unto himself; *i. e.* holy, just, merciful, long-suffering, charitable and bountiful. Now, that he will be pleased to call us so, if we are but Men of Peace, we have his beloved Son's Word; *Blessed are, says he, the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.* I must shew you, *Secondly*, That this glorious Title has several Relations; the first, which is most perfect and incommunicable to any Creature, belongs to Jesus Christ, who is properly and eminently, and by an eternal Generation, the Son of God. The second belongs to the blessed Angels, for he is their Creator, their Preserver, the Author of all their Perfections, the Fountain of all their Glory, and the Origine of all their Happiness. The third belongs to Christians, I mean to the Faithful, to the true Disciples of
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Acts xiv.
28.

our blessed Lord ; they are the Children of God in a particular manner, by the Grace of Adoption. The fourth belongs to all Men, because, *In him they live and move and have their being* : And out of his infinite Goodness they enjoy the Blessings of this Life. The fifth belongs to all other Spiritual Creatures, which are his Children indeed, because his Almighty Power is the cause of their Being ; but they are ungrateful, disobedient, treacherous, rebellious Children ; and so not only disinherited, but besides, left to an utter Despair, and sentenced to endless Torments.

I must lay before you, *Thirdly*, what the being God's Children implies.

It comprehends God's Love, that is, all the Blessings, all the Comforts of this Life, all the Happiness and all the Glory of the next : For when God loves a Man, he stamps a new Image upon him, and makes him like unto himself, not only by infusing his communicable Perfections into his Soul ; but also by rendering him happy and glorious, which he does in protecting him against all his Enemies ; and for his sake in pulling out the Sting of Death, in sweetening the Horror of the Grave,

Grave, in stopping the Mouth of Hell, and in opening the Kingdom of Heaven.

Moreover, when God loves a Man, he bleſſeth him with *The glorious liberty* Rom. viii. *of his Sons*, whereof St. Paul ſpeaks in ^{21.} his *Epistle* to the *Romans*. Now by that Liberty, he ſhakes off the ungrateful, the intolerable, the cruel, the ſhameful Yoke both of the Devil, of Sin and the World; He is adorn'd with excellent Virtues, enlightned and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt; and thus he can work out his eternal Salvation, draw nearer and nearer to the Fountain of all Blifs; and in his Way to Heaven make uſe of God's Creatures, participate of his Graces, receive now and then the Pledges of his moſt precious Love, and feed his Soul upon his ſacred Word; wherein he diſcovers glorious Myſteries, he finds excellent Promiſes, he gets wonderful Hopes, and learns all that's neceſſary to be Bleſſed, both in this Life and in the next.

Furthermore, God when he loves a Man, bleſſeth him likewise with an entire Safety; for the Eyes of his exceeding good Providence being always open upon him, no Harm can happen

John xvi.
20.
Rom.viii.
28.

to that Man, but it must be followed with some great Advantage; for that admirable Providence who knows how to draw Light from Darkness, and Good from Evil, *Turns his sorrow into joy, and Makes all things work together for his good.* Let all his Enemies surround him, let all Men conspire against him, let the Devil make use of all his Wiles, Craftiness, Skill, Malice, Perfidy and Machinations; let Death do his worst, let all the Powers of the Air, all the Influences of the Celestial Globe, let Earth and Hell strive never so much in order to cause him to perish, and to deprive him of the eternal Happiness, and infinite Glory prepared for him; all their Efforts will be in vain, for he shall certainly be blessed in this Life, and get afterwards the incorruptible Inheritance, in spite of them all; because being God's Child, he's the Object of his Providence's Care. Now being protected by that wonderful good Providence, whose Power is infinite, that governs all Things and disposes of all Events whatsoever, according to his good Pleasure, nothing can befall him but it must be for his greatest Advantage: Therefore we may truly

truly say with Solomon, *Safety is of the Lord.* Prov. xxi. 3.

Besides, he bleſſeth him with glorious Relations and Kindred; for by being his Son, he is the Member of the Church, the Mother of all the Faithful: Jesus Christ, the glorious Redeemer of Mankind, and the Governor of the Universe, is his Brother, all the holy Angels are his Kin; the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs, in short, all the Elect are Members of the same Body he belongs to. Finally, God bleſſeth that Man after this Life, with an Eternity full of Glory, Honour, Joy, Content, Pleasure, Delight and most precious Treasures; with a wonderful Improvement of all his Faculties, with an unspeakable Knowledge, with an extraordinary Power, and *With a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* 1 Pet. v. 4.

Now who, attending seriously to all these Things, will refuse, or be loth to make use of all his Industry, of all his Skill, and of all his Prudence; to strive with all his Might, and all his Strength, and take all the Measures, all the Cautions possible, that he may be the Child of God? especially, if he considers that his being the Child of the supreme

supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth, answers to all the Discouragements and all the Difficulties he may be under. And indeed, suppose, my Beloved, we find our Zeal for the Glory of God, and our Fervency for his Service are but little, we have this Comfort, that he is our Father; wherefore he will encrease both. Suppose again, we are sensible that our Desires for Heaven, and our Pursuit after Righteousness are but faint; we must not despond, considering we are the Children of God; wherefore he will make us thirst after Holiness, and inflame our Desires for his Eternal Kingdom. If our Wants and our Necessities were never so great, never so pressing, we may assure ourselves, that God will not forsake us; for he is our Father, wherefore he will certainly provide for us. Whenever we are expos'd to some imminent Danger, let us consider, that God, whose Providence has an absolute Disposition of all Events, and whose Compassions are infinite, is our Father; wherefore he will undoubtedly take Care of us. If we are in any Trouble, we may truly hope that he will get us out of it, because we are his dear Children. Are we surrounded by very
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strong and powerful Enemies, let us not be disheartned, though we be but poor weak Creatures, because Almighty God is our Father ; wherefore he will protect and strengthen us, baffle and confound those Enemies, bring them under, and make us Conquerors.

Moreover, our being the Children of God claims the Comfort, the Assistance, even the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost ; for says St. Paul to the Galatians, *Because ye are sons, God has* Gal. iv. 6. *sent forth the spirit of his Son into your heart, crying, Abba, father :* Wherefore, being once his Children, he sends us that Holy Spirit by whom there passes from Christ into us a blessed Influence, that causes us to encrease in Grace, in Virtue, in Holiness; and to produce all manner of good Fruits, I mean to do all manner of Acts of Charity and generous Actions ; as the Influence of the Sun makes the Plants grow, flourish and fructify. Besides, there passes from him into our Souls a great Power, whereby we are able to subdue our unruly Passions, that so often disturb our Peace and Quietness, that toss us to and fro, that make us rebel against our Creator, Preserver and Benefactor ;
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that breed many and many Sorrows, Vexations and Anguishes; whereby we are able to overcome the innumerable Temptations we are expos'd to, and to get the better of all the Difficulties, the Hindrances and Impediments we meet continually in our Way to Heaven. Furthermore, there passes from our blessed Lord into us a new Life, whereby we *worship God in spirit and in truth*; we advance his Honour and Glory, we do to others what we would they should do unto us; and we *work out our Salvation*. Finally, there passes from him into our Souls, the Seed of that glorious Immortality we shall enjoy in Heaven. These are but some of the exceeding great Advantages of having God for our Father, or rather these are but imperfect, very imperfect Notions of the wonderful and unspeakable Glory and Blessedness of being God's Children; for who can describe, even comprehend, the precious Advantages they enjoy in this very Life? Much less the inexhaustible Riches, the unalterable Honours, and the supreme Felicity they shall possess to all Eternity in the Kingdom of Heaven; for *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart*

John iv.
24.

Phil. ii.
13.

1 Cor. ii.
9.

heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But to be his Children, we must resemble him both in our Affections and in our Actions ; what Jesus Christ said to the Jews, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham,* John viii. 39. may very well be here applied to us : For indeed, if we be the Children of God, we must resemble him in his Holiness, Wisdom, Patience, Mercy, Goodness, Bounty and Meekness ; we must imitate his doing good to his very Enemies, his forgiving those that offend his Glorious Majesty, and his delighting in Peace. We must avoid with the greatest Care, all Strife, Disputes, Contention and Quarrels ; for God being a God of Peace, Union and Concord, will not honour with his blessed Presence any Place, where there are Broils, Tumults, Jars, Disagreements and Divisions ; which is lively intimated to us in the first Book of the *Kings*, where it is said, that, *The Lord was neither in the strong wind,* 1 Kings xix. 11, &c. *that rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks ; nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire ; but that he was in a still small voice, and spake from thence to Elijah.*

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But I must tell you now, that the Children of God may be divided in three Classes, or in three Ages; the First is of Babes, the Second of grown Children, and the Third of Men.

1 John ii.
12, 13,
&c.

St. John calls the first *Little children*, the second *Young men*, and the third *Fathers*. I say, That the first Class is of Babes, I mean very weak Christians, who are not capable of getting the Qualifications necessary in order to be Peace-makers; and so of doing much good, either in promoting Peace among their Brethren by their Interest, or in inducing them to follow it by their Discourses or Examples; wherefore God who is infinitely good, and the tenderest of all Fathers, requires only of such Christians (as to the matter in Hand) to do nothing that may disturb the Peace of their Neighbours, and to be of a meek, humble, quiet and peaceable Mind. I say, That the second Class is of grown Children, I mean of Christians grown in Grace, and in the Knowledge of God, in whose Power it is, not only to attain a considerable Peaceableness, but likewise to get several of the Qualifications requisite to be a Promoter of Peace; and so to do good either in endearing that
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precious Peace, or in advancing it among their Brethren, or in reconciling of Enemies; wherefore God expects they should be Friends to Peace according to their Abilities. I say, That the Third Class is of Men, I mean of Christians enlightned by the Holy Spirit of God, and well instructed by his sacred Word; Christians well exercised in Charity and Humility: Now they can make themselves Masters of Peaceableness, and acquire most of the Qualifications necessary, in order to be great Promoters of Peace; and so to do Abundance of Good, either in begetting in the Hearts of their Brethren a great Esteem for, and a true Value of Peace; or in preventing betimes, Disputes, Divisions and Quarrels, or in making Enemies Friends again: Wherefore God demands of such Christians, not only to be of a quiet, peaceable Mind; but besides, to encourage and induce Men to Peace, both by their Discourses and Examples; to advance and cherish it with all the Care possible, and either to destroy or to banish all the Seeds of Discord, Contention and Disturbance, as far as it lies in their Power.

Furthermore, the Children of God may be divided likewise according to their several Stations in the World: Some may promote Peace, and cherish it by their great Authority; others by the great Reputation they have gotten, some by strong Arguments, powerful Reasons; and others only in inducing their Neighbours to Peace, by Examples of Peaceableness. But to conclude,

What I have said just now, shews plainly, that it is in the Power of all the Children of God, to contribute somewhat to Peace; wherefore we may easily perceive whether we are so Blessed as to be his Children; for we need but examine our selves, and see whether we are of a peaceable, quiet and meek Mind; whether we take our Delight in it, and are utterly Enemies to Quarrels, Disturbances and Contentions: We need but distinguish the Character of God's Children and that of the Devil's. The Character of the first is, to be humble, easy, meek, peaceable, good-natur'd, merciful, reconcilers of Enemies, and very tender of their Neighbour's Reputation. But the Character of the Devil's Children is, to take their Delight in seeing their
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bours by the Ears, or in hearing them inveigh against each other, and tear one another's Reputation in pieces, and to be make-bate, turbulent, seditious, unquiet, blustering, ill-conditioned, un placable Promoters of Quarrels, Discord and Divisions; Lovers of Whispering, Reviling, Backbiting, Sowers of Diffension, Strife and Variance.

Now the Reward of the Children of the Devil, will be an eternal Misery, a continual Despair, an endless Anguish, everlasting Torments; and withal, piercing Reproaches and gnawing Remorses to all Eternity; besides their Unquietness and their Anguish of Mind in this Life, as well as a great many Disappointments, Crosses and Discomforts, and Abundance of Sorrows, Vexations and Troubles. But the Children of God shall have the Advantage to be blessed for ever; the Glory, the inexpressible Glory to be *His heirs and joint-heirs with Christ*, and the unspeakable Comfort to contemplate to all Eternity the glorious Face of the Eternal Majesty, to praise his Holy Name, to extol his wonderful Power, and to magnify his unutterable Love to Mankind: Besides, the many Graces, Favours and Blessings he bestows upon

Rom. viii.
17.

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us in this Life, as I have already shewn to you. Wherefore let us earnestly intreat you, not only to be of a peaceable Mind; but withal, to study with all the Care, and all the Industry possible, what belongs to Peace, to pursue and promote it as much as in you lies, that you may have the Comfort to convince both your selves and others, that you are truly the Children of God; and consequently the Inheriters of his glorious Kingdom, with all the Happiness, and all the Treasures it contains. *Which God of his infinite Goodness and Mercy, &c.*

F I N I S.

